



News Release from Congressman
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SIMMONS STATEMENT ON THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR RESOLUTION

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today made the following remarks during debate on H.Res. 868, a House Resolution to Debate the Global War on Terror:

Mr. Speaker, I rise in qualified support of the Resolution.

There is much in this resolution to like. After all, it honors those Americans who have fought in the Global War on Terror, and especially those who have been wounded or died. It expresses a commitment to a "sovereign, free, secure and united Iraq." And it urges that we "protect freedom."

But this resolution fails to fully address a key question that most Americans are asking: "When are the troops coming home?"

Now let me be clear – I have long opposed setting a "date certain" for "immediate withdrawal" of U.S. forces because such plans encourage our enemies and put our troops at risk.

However, speaking as a Vietnam Veteran I believe that every unconventional conflict has a "tipping point" where the presence of foreign soldiers on sovereign soil begins to become counter-productive. I learned that we cannot secure a foreign land all by ourselves. We must plan a transfer of authority where a sovereign state assumes the solemn task of securing their own people within their own borders.

I believe that this "tipping point" is fast approaching in Iraq. We must patiently, but firmly, insist that the new Iraqi government assume these responsibilities. We must also be systematic in bringing home those American soldiers who have so bravely served us on the ground in Iraq.

President Bush and this Congress must clearly tell our partners in Iraq – particularly, the new government – that they must step up to the plate and assume their solemn responsibilities for securing their country. The new Iraqi government must understand that the American people will not allow their own sons and daughters to stay indefinitely; and that it's time for the Iraqis to assume more of the burden of sacrifice that any war and any revolution might bring.

It is time for Iraq to come together and show the American people that it is ready to defend itself, govern itself and sustain itself.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I observe in this great chamber two large portraits. One is of George Washington, our revolutionary leader. The other is of France's General Lafayette, who helped us with our revolution from 1777 to 1781.

It is instructive to note, however, that General Lafayette did not stay here forever; nor did we want him to. Good friends know when to come – and when to go.

Mr. Speaker it is important to be resolute about our support for our troops and their important mission. But it is also a time to send a clear message to our friends in Iraq, that our commitment is conditional on their own successes, and that our days in their country are not indefinite.

And although I wish this resolution could have made this point more clearly, I will support the resolution.

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